



THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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EDUCATORS LEAD POWERFUL MOVEMENT IN TANGIPAHOA PARISH



A school bus carrying concerned drivers from across the parish arrives at the Tangipahoa Parish School Board meeting on November 7.



Concerned school employees prepare to take a stand in solidarity at the TPSB meeting.



Tangipahoa Association of Educators President Ryan Lawrence delivers a list of employee concerns on behalf of nearly 200 of the parish's school bus drivers.

Sometimes, when you see an injustice, you have no choice but to stand up - not for what is easy, but for what is right. It is this sentiment that drove a school employee-led action in Tangipahoa Parish - one which many believe will initiate changes to the way the school district handles business.

This November, Tangipahoa Parish citizens were asked to approve a property tax increase. While dollars generated from the tax would go toward a minimal pay boost for school employees, most would also notice a hike in expenses due to the increase in taxes. When Tangipahoa Parish Association of Educators President Ryan Lawrence heard about the proposal, something didn't sit right.

"Over the years, the Tangipahoa Parish community has passed several taxes benefiting schools. They approved taxes for a magnet program, an alternative school, a juvenile detention center, and even a general school board tax," Lawrence said. "Filling in financial gaps with yet another tax doesn't address the long-term issues affecting our parish school system."

The issue was particularly troubling for support employees, especially parish school bus drivers who own their buses and have to foot the costs of yearly maintenance on a \$15,000 annual salary. Bus drivers across the parish started to talk about their discontent for the measure. When Lawrence got wind of the talk, he jumped into action. He reached out to local school bus driver Cabrina Robertson to determine how they could work together to organize parish school employees. Together, Lawrence and Robertson hosted meetings for local drivers to weigh in on the issue. The response was unprecedented. More than 100 drivers attended the meetings to voice their concerns - everything from compensation to workplace morale. Lawrence and Robertson compiled the feedback gathered from each meeting and made plans to present the information to the school board.

"The pay issue brought us together, but we ultimately determined a much more pressing issue: the need for collaboration on all decisions impacting our work environments," said Robertson.

When the time came to present the list of issues to the school board, more than 200 drivers showed up in support of a statement read on their behalf - a message calling for collaboration and professional respect. Not only did the statement shine a light on issues impacting educators' work environments, but it fostered an important discussion between board members, employees, and the general public, causing many to acknowledge the need to take a closer look at raising school employee morale. Lawrence said he was amazed at the unity displayed by the dedicated workers.

"This is the beginning of a movement. Would it have been nice to get an extra \$100 a month? Sure. But the more important issue is about showing appreciation to the people who so selflessly dedicate their lives to kids. We need to show them gratitude with a respectable raise, something another tax simply can't accomplish," Lawrence said. "We will continue to keep the pressure on the school board to investigate ways to better allocate funds in the school system's budget in order to accommodate reasonable, long-term, district-wide pay raises."

When Election Day came, the tax failed. And while this defeat was considered a win, educators felt they experienced a greater victory in their efforts to bring larger issues to the forefront.

"We came together to let the public hear our side, and now, all eyes are on the school board to do what's right," Lawrence said. "I truly believe that our work on this issue will result in more inclusive collaboration with school board members, and if this happens, we've accomplished our goal."



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Debbie Meaux, President

This joyous season, I wish each of you time for family and a period of rejuvenation. We all know how hectic our everyday lives can be – especially in our careers as educators. Please know that you're in my thoughts this Holiday Season. While we try to fit it all in and give those we love the best of ourselves, I hope each of you can find some peace during your time off of work.. I hope you can find some time to focus on yourselves – take that extra-long nap, read a book that's been calling your name, or just sit alone and be still.

Before things slow down, I want to remind you about a very important item on the association's calendar: LAE Leadership Elections. Please keep in mind that the nomination process is now open for several seats on the LAE Board of Directors as well as NEA Representative Assembly Delegate seats. Information on openings and timelines is available at lae.org/election2018. In a democratically run organization like the LAE, the strength of the whole is determined by those who lead. We are only as strong as those who carry the torch. If you have a passion for our schools and your students, consider stepping into a leadership position. All nominations must be submitted by no later than Sunday, January 7, 2018, at 11:59 pm.

Now that I've shared this information, I want to shift the focus of this message to say goodbye to someone in the LAE who has been an institution and an inspiration to so many of us. Our executive director, Ms. Lynda Guidry, will retire in January. She's been a prominent figure with the association since the 70s. She was a teacher and local association president in St. Martin Parish, and eventually transitioned to full-time association work as a UniServ Director. She moved into management as LAE Field Services Director and eventually took over as head of operations when she stepped into the role of LAE Executive Director. Lynda took on this role during a time when the LAE was facing major challenges, but her dedication for Louisiana's educators and students helped her to look past the challenges to help the association adopt a new way of doing its organizing work. This move has been so successful that the NEA now regards Louisiana as an affiliate "on the move" and has invested more than two million dollars in our state programs.

There is no way to thank an individual who has given her entire career to the betterment of the education profession, its professionals, and the children

served in our state. Lynda's legacy is, undoubtedly, cemented into LAE's history. So many of us know her to be not only a force of nature, but a force with which to be reckoned. Thousands of school employees have gotten to know her vivacious spirit and passion for union activism. I, along with my team of leaders, trust her instincts surrounding issues that stand to impact the association. Lynda has not only been my right-hand woman, but also my friend and biggest champion. I have come to depend upon her good nature, spot-on advice, and her confidence in my leadership abilities; and I'm happy that she plans to continue to serve the association as a retired member (she'll lead the LAE-founded Louisiana Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, a group dedicated to raising awareness about community schools model).

Please join me in wishing Lynda well as she embarks on the next stage in her life.

As we look toward the future, I am confident that the association will experience continued success. We are gearing up for several exciting initiatives in 2018 including Read Across Louisiana, the Thank a Louisiana Educator campaign, the annual legislative session, and advocacy efforts surrounding testing practices. We enter 2018 with ambitious goals that are sure to keep us busy, and we look forward to meeting more members so we can share news on the good work of the association. Until then, I hope your holidays are restful and filled with the joys of the season, and that the New Year brings great blessings. Take care and be blessed.

In Solidarity,
President Meaux

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START THINKING ABOUT NOMINATIONS FOR THE LAE IMAGE AWARDS

The *LAE Image Awards* are presented annually to recognize members whose leadership and actions in their professions have advanced public education in Louisiana. Every year, the LAE chooses one outstanding teacher, ESP, administrator, ancillary personnel, *Friend of Education*, and *Human and Civil Rights Trailblazer* to honor. The LAE is now accepting applications for the *2018 Image Awards*. The deadline to submit nomination packets is February 16, 2018. You can download the applications at lae.org/imageawards.



LAE AND NEA TEAM UP TO EXPAND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS FOR MEMBER EDUCATORS

The LAE Teaching and Learning Center continues to solidify its position as a respected professional development provider for Louisiana's K-12 public school employees. Through a partnership with the NEA Center for Great Public Schools, LAE's Teaching and Learning Center offers unique course options focusing on the professional growth needs of member-educators. Its most compelling attribute: curriculum developed by Louisiana educators, for Louisiana educators. LAE Teaching and Learning Center Coordinator Suzanne Harris is a teacher fresh out of the classroom, so she truly understands the value of relevant and accessible training opportunities for Louisiana's school employees.

"We're working to connect our course offerings to the educators who need them," Harris said. "Trainings that would normally be 'out of the budget' for school employees are free to LAE members, which only stands to prove the value of association membership."

Another immediate focus of the Teaching and Learning Center is growing the center's pool of trainers so that the LAE can sponsor member-led "pop-up" workshops in school districts across the state.

"So many of our veteran educators want to help their colleagues thrive in the profession," Harris said. "The LAE-TLC's facilitator



trainings provide opportunities for these educators to learn best practices for presenting topics on the aspects of the education profession they're passionate about."

This fall, the LAE-TLC hosted workshops on topics ranging from Praxis I study sessions to National Board Certification support. Harris, along with her team of LAE staff and member trainers Antonio Pelt, Alishia Vallien, and Jim Croad, hosted an extremely successful workshop in St. Martin Parish where more than 500 support professionals learned about about cultural competency and how it contributes to unconscious bias. The group presented thought-provoking activities on how to avoid student service inequities by making opportunities accessible to every student, regardless of their need, circumstance, or personal obstacle.



Louisiana NBCT candidates attend October 2017 JumpStart workshop in Baton Rouge.

Harris said the Teaching and Learning Center is planning trainings for early 2018, which include a Cultural Competency Facilitator training in Baton Rouge (January 6 and 7) and National Board Certification JumpStart trainings offered in two locations (January 12 -13 in Baton Rouge and January 19 - 21 in Shreveport). LAE-TLC workshop topics to look out for in 2018 include *Early Career Success Strategies, Recognizing Differences and Creating Opportunities, Praxis I Preparation*, and other blended learning topics. For updated information on dates and locations for these trainings, visit www.lae.org/teachingandlearning.



LAE member Leslie Birdon leads a successful Praxis I study session in LaSalle Parish.



Intense focus fills the room at a Praxis I study session in Ruston.

LAE MEMBERS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF TEACHING ATTEND TRAINING TO STRENGTHEN CONNECTION TO ASSOCIATION

Supporting Louisiana educators during the early years in the profession has become a top priority for the LAE. This November, a team of Louisiana educators (who've been working in the profession for fewer than five years) joined dozens of their colleagues from across the nation in Portland, Oregon to explore the landscape of the teaching profession for millennial educators. LAE's Early Career Educator Organizer Yvie Johnson expressed her pride in the talented group of educators who represented Louisiana.

"There's power in what happens when we make a space for educators to take charge," Johnson said. "I am encouraged by this diverse group and look forward to seeing how they apply their hard work in their home districts."

The team representing Louisiana had the opportunity to share their experiences with "Early Career Learning Labs" where veteran teachers partner with their colleagues with five years of experience or less to help them expand their professional knowledge. They also established relationships with their colleagues from across the nation and made plans to collaborate with one another on future initiatives.

Thanks to LAE members Aimee Lafleur, Rachelle Dehrab, Evita Baylor, and Kiersten Peltier for representing the association with such grace and professionalism. Your hard work will help shape the association's plans for supporting educators new to Louisiana's teaching force.



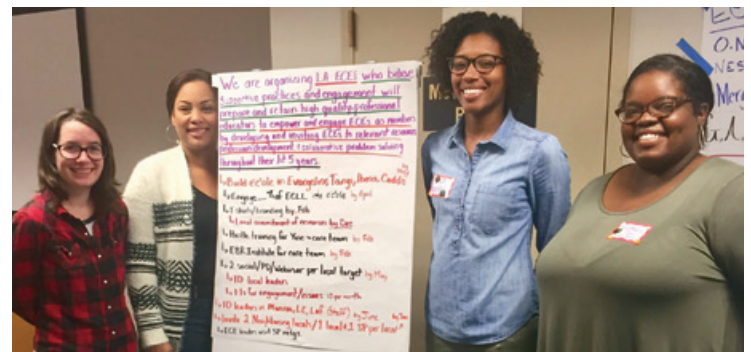
Rachelle Dehrab shares her experience with LAE's early career learning lab experiences and why being an engaged LAE member is important to her.



Early career educators from across the United States working hard in Portland, Oregon.



LAE early career educators Evita Baylor, Rachelle Dehrab, Aimee LaFleur, and Kiersten Peltier show their solidarity for their colleagues from across the nation.



Louisiana attendees established a state early career educator group, developed a theory of change, and collaborated with colleagues from across the country.

NEA CLICK & SAVE "BUY-LIGHTS" FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON: HOT DEALS AND DISCOUNTS FROM NEA MEMBER BENEFITS

Holiday shopping is in full swing. Be sure to check out the best-in-market pricing at the **NEA Click & Save Holiday Fair!**

Plus, there are other exciting events planned throughout December, like Green Monday, Free Shipping Day, 5 STAR for a Day and, of course, post-holiday sales!

Visit www.neamb.com/clickandsave often to get the best deals as they happen!



LAE'S 2018 ELECTION SEASON IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

"In a democratically run organization like LAE, the strength of the whole is determined by those who lead. We are only as strong as those who carry the torch."

– DEBBIE MEAUX, LAE PRESIDENT

Have you ever wanted to see a certain change in the association, contribute to initiatives, or serve on committees that can impact public school working conditions? If so, now's your chance!

LAE Election Season is right around the corner. In 2018, there are several LAE Board of Directors seats up for re-election. It is required that a candidate have a minimum of three consecutive years of association membership to be eligible to run for a seat on the LAE Board. A full list of offices up for election, procedures, and deadlines is provided within.

Members interested in having a say on policy decisions and the association's agenda on a national level might be interested

in attending the NEA Representative Assembly as a Louisiana delegate. This is also a position up for grabs this election cycle.

Interested candidates must submit a nomination form for the respective position of interest. In addition to the nomination form, each candidate has the option of submitting a short professional biography (not to exceed 50 words) and a high-resolution photo, which will appear in an upcoming issue of this newsletter. Nomination forms can be obtained by visiting lae.org/election2018. All nomination forms must be returned to the LAE Headquarters Office by January 7, 2018 by 11:59 pm.

CHART OF SEATS OPEN FOR ELECTION

The LAE Board of Directors is composed of association leaders who are active education employees elected by their peers to act for the association in between meetings of the LAE Representative Assembly. You must have three consecutive years of LAE membership to be eligible to run for the offices listed below:

Board of Directors	Seat Race	Restrictions	Term of Office
First Associational District	B	None	3 years
First Associational District	C	None	1 year
Second Associational District	A	Minority	1 year
Second Associational District	B	None	3 years
Second Associational District	C	None	2 years
Third Associational District	A	None	2 years
Third Associational District	B	None	3 years
Fourth Associational District	A	None	1 year
Fourth Associational District	B	None	3 years
Fifth Associational District	B	None	2 years
Fifth Associational District	C	None	3 years
Sixth Associational District	A	None	3 years

LAE ELECTION PROCEDURES

1. An article in *The LAE Voice* and on the LAE website will outline the nomination process and will include the election procedures and calendar.
2. Nomination forms will be available on the LAE website, at the LAE Headquarters Office (candidates may call 800- 256-4523), and emailed to local presidents and LAE Board of Directors members in December.
3. Upon receipt of a candidate's nomination form, LAE will verify receipt by email. Candidates are strongly recommended to contact LAE if verification has not been received within one day of the form's expected arrival at the LAE Headquarters.
4. Notification of receipt of a candidate's form will occur within one day of receiving a nomination form, except during the Holiday Break. Nomination forms arriving during the holiday will be received on the date of the reopening of the office.
5. The email address for electronically forwarding nominations forms - lguillot@lae.org - will be directed to the office of the Executive Director or her designee. **All forms must be fully completed and in the LAE Headquarters Office by January 7, 2018 by 11:59 pm.**
6. For reproduction purposes, photos will only be accepted by mail or email. Quality of the photo may be affected by email in which case the LAE Elections Committee authorizes LAE to contact the candidate to request a usable photo.
7. Biographical information composed by the candidates, not to exceed 50 words, will be included with the election information/ballot. Bio information will be printed as submitted; it will not be edited for grammar.
8. Candidates will be notified by email (January 13) when the nominations have been certified by the LAE Elections Committee.
9. An article in *The LAE Voice* and on www.lae.org will inform members of the scheduled elections. The article will contain the bios of candidates along with a sample ballot and voting instructions. Ballots will appear in the March issue of *The LAE Voice* and will be posted on the website in the *Members-Only* area.
10. All voting will be online. Voting members will use their LAE Member ID number assigned by NEA when voting. (Number appears on the membership card issued by LAE as well as above the name in the address section of every issue of *The LAE Voice*.)
11. A paper ballot is available upon request from the LAE Elections Neutral.
12. The first vote recorded by the LAE Elections Neutral will be the one counted.
13. March 31, 2018 is the deadline for receipt of all ballots by LAE Elections Neutral.
14. The LAE Elections Neutral will have the election results certified by a notary public. The certification is to be provided to the LAE Executive Director by overnight delivery. The LAE Elections Committee will meet as scheduled to certify the results, and will invite candidates or their representatives to be present during the certification of the results. Candidates will be notified by mail of the results.
15. All candidates who receive a majority of the votes cast shall be certified as elected by the LAE Elections Committee. Should no candidate receive a majority of the votes cast, a runoff will be held between the top two candidates.
16. Should a runoff election be necessary, members of the appropriate district will be notified electronically and an announcement will appear in *The LAE Voice*.
17. After all election procedures and challenges have been followed, the LAE Elections Committee will declare any unopposed candidate as winner of the office sought. The ballot will not reflect any unopposed candidate.

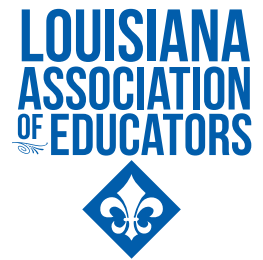
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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 20 -
January 2
LAE Winter Break*

January 13
LAE Committee Day:
LAE Elections Committee

January 15
"Martin Luther King, Jr. Day"

January 19-20
LAE Executive
Committee Meeting

*LAE Headquarters CLOSED